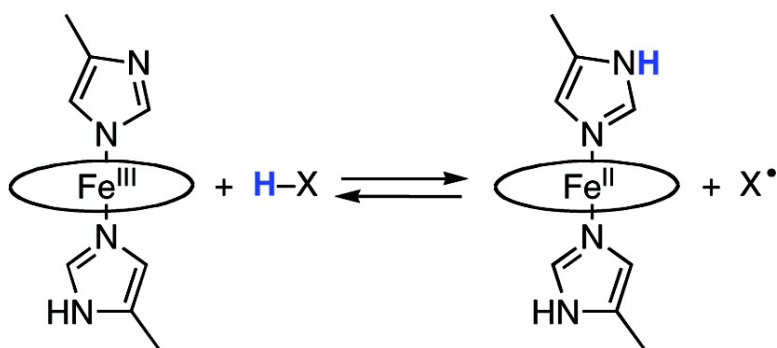


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Hydrogen Atom Transfer Reactions of Iron–Porphyrin–Imidazole Complexes as Models for Histidine-Ligated Heme Reactivity

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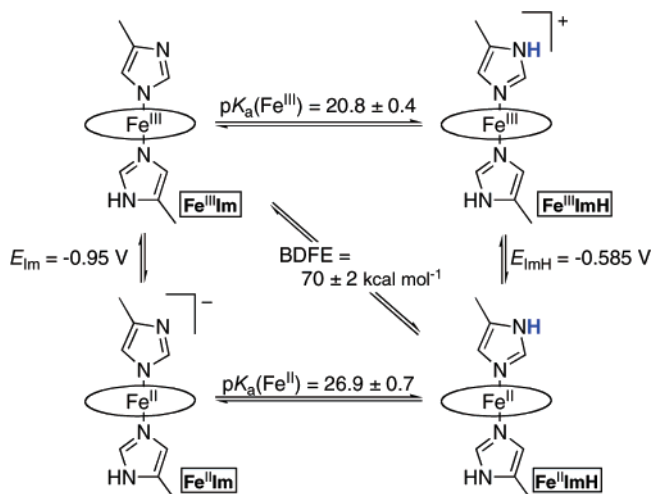
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Histidine-ligated hemes are key cofactors in a wide range of biological redox processes. Many of these hemes are thought to serve purely as electron-transfer cofactors; however their pH-dependent redox potentials¹ indicate that they can also react by proton-coupled electron transfer (PCET²). Such PCET reactivity has received relatively little attention. The clearest example is perhaps the oxidation of ascorbate by cytochromes *b*₅₆₁ by a concerted proton–electron transfer (CPET) mechanism,³ as determined by Njus and co-workers using thermochemical considerations.⁴ The heme *b* centers in the mitochondrial *bc*₁ complex are involved in the interconversion of quinones and hydroquinones, which is inherently a PCET process. We report here that model porphyrin–iron–bis(imidazole) complexes react readily by hydrogen atom transfer (HAT). HAT is, in our view,^{3,5} a type of CPET reaction in which a proton and an electron are transferred in a single kinetic step from one donor to one acceptor. These porphyrin–imidazole complexes have been developed as structural, spectroscopic, and electron-transfer models for the growing family of bis(histidine)-ligated heme proteins,⁶ which includes the cyt *b*₅₆₁ and heme *b* centers mentioned above.⁷

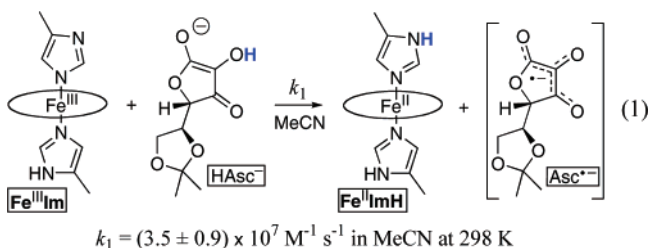
Our model system uses iron complexes of tetraphenylporphyrin (TPP) and 4-methylimidazole (ImH), following the studies of Valentine et al.⁶ They showed that the use of 4-methylimidazole prevents oligomerization of (TPP)Fe–imidazolate complexes. [(TPP)Fe^{III}(ImH)₂]PF₆ (**Fe^{III}ImH**, Scheme 1) was prepared by a modification of their procedure.⁶ The new Fe^{II} derivative (TPP)Fe^{II}(ImH)₂ (**Fe^{II}ImH**) was synthesized from (TPP)Fe^{III} and ImH, and was characterized by ¹H NMR and UV–vis spectroscopies and elemental analysis.⁹ The deprotonated Fe^{III} and Fe^{II} complexes, (TPP)Fe(Im)(ImH)^{0/−} (**Fe^{III}Im**[−] and **Fe^{II}Im**), were generated in situ from **Fe^{III}ImH** or **Fe^{II}ImH** with the base DBU (1,8-diazabicyclo(5.4.0)undec-7-ene). These complexes have not been isolated because of weak binding of the second imidazole.⁶ Spectroscopic measurements in acetonitrile show that ImH binding to (TPP)Fe^{III}(Im) has *K*_{eq} = 1300 ± 100 M^{−1}, consistent with previous studies in toluene and THF.⁶ All of the measurements below were performed in acetonitrile containing 5 mM ImH, to ensure that only six-coordinate complexes of both Fe^{II} and Fe^{III} were present. Low-spin configurations are indicated for **Fe^{III}ImH** and **Fe^{III}Im** by the Evans method¹⁰ and for **Fe^{II}ImH** based upon its diamagnetic ¹H NMR.⁹

The oxidation of ascorbate by cytochromes *b*₅₆₁ has been modeled by the reaction of **Fe^{III}Im** with the acetonitrile-soluble derivative tetrabutylammonium 5,6-isopropylidene ascorbate (ⁿBu₄N[HAsc]; eq 1).¹¹ This substrate should have similar reactivity to ascorbate given the distance of the isopropylidene group from the enol functionality.¹² The reaction of ⁿBu₄N[HAsc] with a solution of **Fe^{III}Im** results in UV–vis and ¹H NMR spectral changes consistent with quantitative conversion to **Fe^{II}ImH** (eq 1). This is a net addition of H• to **Fe^{III}Im**. Stopped-flow kinetic measurements show that the reaction proceeds very rapidly. Using second-order conditions with the lowest practical concentrations (9.0 μM **Fe^{III}Im** +

Scheme 1. Thermochemistry of the (TPP)Fe(ImH)₂ System in MeCN



10.5 μM HAsc[−]), the reaction is 45% complete within the 2–4 ms mixing time of our instrument. Global analysis of the available spectral data using SpectFit¹³ gave good calculated spectra for **Fe^{III}Im** and **Fe^{III}Im** and the rate constant *k*₁ = (3.5 ± 0.9) × 10⁷ M^{−1} s^{−1}.⁹ The deuterated ⁿBu₄N[DAsc] reacts more slowly under similar conditions, in solutions containing 5 mM 4-methylimidazole-ND. Global analysis gives *k*_{1D} = (7.5 ± 0.8) × 10⁶ M^{−1} s^{−1} and therefore *k*_H/*k*_D = 4.6 ± 1.3.

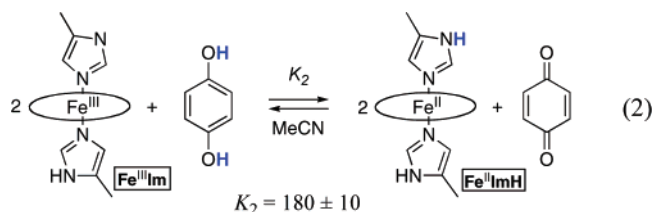


The protonated derivative **Fe^{III}ImH** is also reduced by ⁿBu₄N[HAsc] to **Fe^{II}ImH**, in a net electron transfer (ET) reaction. Monitoring this reaction by stopped-flow UV–vis spectroscopy shows that it is more than a factor of 10 slower than reaction 1 (Figure S3). The time course can be roughly fit to a second-order rate law (with an apparent *k* of ~2 × 10⁶ M^{−1} s^{−1}) but the kinetics are clearly more complex, especially for the deuterated derivative ⁿBu₄N[DAsc]. This may be due to rapid reactions of the ascorbyl radical product, HAsc• or DAsc•, such as protonation of the HAsc[−] reactant.¹⁴ DAsc[−] reduces **Fe^{III}ImH** more slowly than HAsc[−] does (Figure S4), but the kinetic complexity prevents obtaining a value for *k*_H/*k*_D.

Electron transfer from HAsc[−] to **Fe^{III}ImH** cannot occur by an inner-sphere (coordinated ascorbate) pathway because the exchange

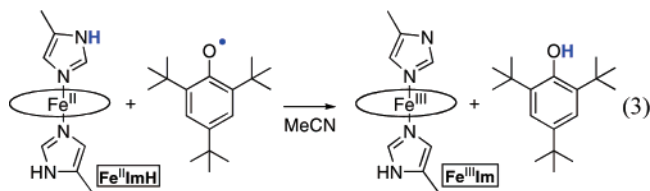
of bound and free ImH in all these complexes is slow on the ^1H NMR time scale. Thus the reduction of $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{ImH}$ likely proceeds via outer-sphere ET from HAsc^- . Deprotonated $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ has a 0.36 V lower redox potential than $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{ImH}$ (see below), yet is reduced substantially faster under the same conditions. This indicates that the ascorbate reduction of $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ proceeds by a mechanism other than outer-sphere ET, most likely by HAT. A HAT path is also indicated by the primary H/D kinetic isotope effect of 4.6 ± 1.3 .

$\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ reacts rapidly with hydroquinone to give an equilibrium mixture with $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ and benzoquinone (eq 2). This equilibrium

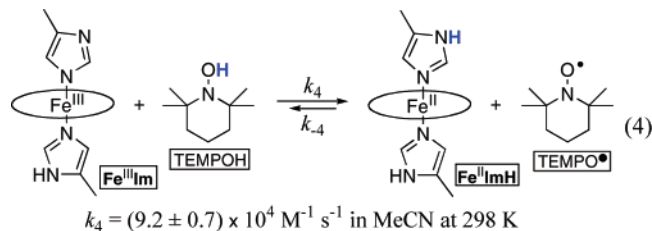


can also be established from $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ plus benzoquinone, as observed in both directions by both UV-vis and ^1H NMR spectroscopies. Adding aliquots of benzoquinone to $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ and monitoring by optical spectroscopy yields $K_2 = 180 \pm 10$ ($\Delta G^\circ_2 = -3.1 \pm 0.2$ kcal mol $^{-1}$). These reactions are potential models for quinone/quinol interconversions by the *b* hemes in the *bc*₁ complex.

$\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ is also rapidly and quantitatively oxidized by the stable phenoxyl radical 2,4,6-*t*-Bu₃C₆H₂O $^\bullet$ to give $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ and the phenol (eq 3; by UV-vis and ^1H NMR spectroscopies).



To probe HAT processes in this system in more detail, the reaction of $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ with the hydroxylamine TEMPOH in acetonitrile has been examined. This reaction gives $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ and the nitroxyl radical TEMPO (eq 4), again by net H-atom ($\text{H}^+ + e^-$) transfer. The equilibrium constant for reaction 4 was directly measured⁹ by optical titration of $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ with TEMPO, in MeCN at 298 K, yielding $K_4 = (4.5 \pm 0.5) \times 10^3$ ($\Delta G^\circ_4 = -5.0 \pm 0.2$ kcal mol $^{-1}$).



Rate constants for reaction 4 have been determined in MeCN using stopped-flow spectrophotometry (Figure 1).⁹ At 298 K, the forward reaction has $k_4 = (9.2 \pm 0.7) \times 10^4$ M $^{-1}$ s $^{-1}$. k_4 has been measured with 1–16 equiv of TEMPOH, ranging from mixed second-order approach to equilibrium conditions to pseudo-first-order conditions. The reverse reaction between $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ and TEMPO has $k_{-4} = 20 \pm 2$ M $^{-1}$ s $^{-1}$ (measured using a large excess of TEMPO). The ratio $k_4/k_{-4} = (4.6 \pm 0.5) \times 10^3$ is in excellent agreement with the static equilibrium measurements above. Reaction

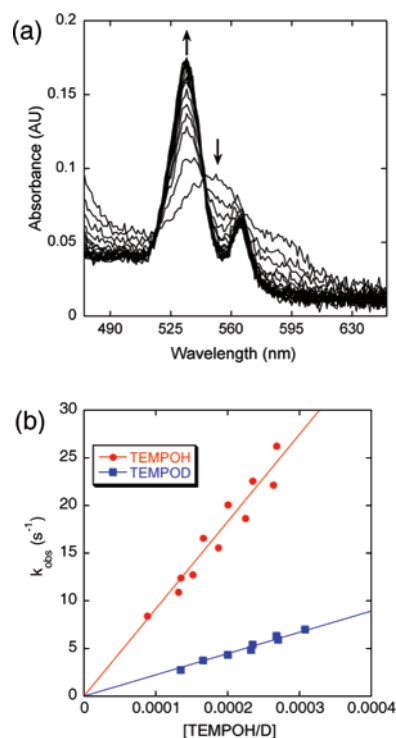


Figure 1. Kinetic data for the reaction of $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ (15 μM) + 150 μM TEMPOH in MeCN (eq 4): (a) visible spectra over 0.3 s; (b) plots of the pseudo-first order k_{obs} vs $[\text{TEMPOH/D}]$.

of $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ with TEMPO-D proceeds more slowly, with $k_{4\text{D}} = (2.2 \pm 0.1) \times 10^4$ M $^{-1}$ s $^{-1}$; the primary kinetic isotope effect (KIE) is 3.8 ± 0.4 .

These reactions can be understood in terms of the thermochemistry of electron, proton, and hydrogen atom transfers in the iron system.⁹ Cyclic voltammograms of $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{ImH}$ and $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ show a chemically reversible couple with $E_{\text{ImH}} = -0.585 \pm 0.010$ V versus $\text{Cp}_2\text{Fe}^{0/+}$. Titrations of $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{ImH}$ and $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ with Et_3N ($\text{p}K_{\text{a}} = 18.5$ in MeCN¹⁵) and DBU ($\text{p}K_{\text{a}} = 24.3$ ^{15b}), respectively, were monitored by optical spectroscopy to give the $\text{p}K_{\text{a}}$ values shown in Scheme 1. The $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ (E_{Im}) redox potential is calculated from these E° and $\text{p}K_{\text{a}}$ values, using the edges of Scheme 1 as a closed thermochemical cycle [$RT \ln(K_{\text{FeIII}}/K_{\text{FeII}}) - F(E_{\text{ImH}} - E_{\text{Im}}) = 0$]. Finally, eq 5 gives the bond dissociation free energy (BDFE) for an N–H bond in $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ as 70 ± 2 kcal mol $^{-1}$ [$C_{\text{G}}(\text{MeCN}) = 54.9$ kcal mol $^{-1}$ with E° versus $\text{Cp}_2\text{Fe}^{0/+}$].¹⁶ This value is also independently determined from the equilibrium constants for reactions 2 and 4 given previously. The BDFE of TEMPOH (66.5

$$\text{BDFE}[\text{X-H}] =$$

$$23.06E^\circ + 1.37\text{p}K_{\text{a}} + C_{\text{G}} \text{ (in kcal mol}^{-1}\text{)} \quad (5)$$

± 1 kcal mol $^{-1}$)¹⁷ and $\Delta G^\circ_4 = -5.0 \pm 0.2$ kcal mol $^{-1}$ give BDFE($\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$) as 71.5 ± 1 kcal mol $^{-1}$. Similarly, $\Delta G^\circ_2 = -3.1 \pm 0.2$ kcal mol $^{-1}$ and the average BDFE for the two hydroquinone O–H bonds (69 ± 2 kcal mol $^{-1}$)¹⁸ gives a $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ BDFE of 70.5 ± 2 kcal mol $^{-1}$. These values are all in very good agreement.

The equilibrium constant for the TEMPOH reaction (eq 4) has been measured from 276 to 331 K; van't Hoff analysis gives $\Delta H^\circ_4 = -13.0 \pm 1.0$ kcal mol $^{-1}$ and $\Delta S^\circ_4 = -27 \pm 3$ cal K $^{-1}$ mol $^{-1}$. ΔH°_4 is the difference between the bond dissociation enthalpies (BDEs) of $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ and TEMPOH in MeCN; using BDE(TEMPO–H) = 71.5 ± 1 kcal mol $^{-1}$,¹⁹ the N–H BDE of $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ is 84.5 ± 2 kcal mol $^{-1}$. The ground-state entropy change for reaction

4 is quite substantial ($T\Delta S^\ddagger_4 = -8 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$). We have previously reported similarly large $|\Delta S^\ddagger|$ values for HAT reactions of non-heme iron centers and found them to be an intrinsic property of the $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{L}/\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{LH}$ redox couple.^{16c} The nonzero entropies for these reactions indicate that bond dissociation free energies need to be used for HAT reactions, not the more commonly used BDEs.

The reaction of $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ and TEMPOH (eq 4) could in principle occur by initial outer-sphere electron transfer followed by proton transfer (ET/PT), initial PT followed by ET, or by concerted transfer of the electron and proton (HAT/CPET).^{3,5} Using the thermochemical data in Scheme 1 and the properties of TEMPOH,²⁰ the $\Delta G^\circ_{\text{ET}}$ for initial electron transfer from TEMPOH to $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ to give $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{Im}$ and TEMPOH^+ is $+38 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$. The barrier for initial ET must be at least as large as this value: $\Delta G^\ddagger_{\text{ET}} \geq \Delta G^\circ_{\text{ET}}$. Since this is much larger than the observed Eyring barrier, $\Delta G^\ddagger_4 = 10.3 \pm 0.8 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$, ET cannot be the pathway for reaction 4. Similarly, initial PT to give TEMPO^- and $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{ImH}$ has $\Delta G^\ddagger_{\text{PT}} \geq \Delta G^\circ_{\text{PT}} = 27 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$, again much larger than the observed ΔG^\ddagger_4 . Thus neither stepwise path can be occurring. Initial HAT, where the proton and electron are transferred in a single kinetic step, is much more favorable ($\Delta G^\circ_4 = -5.0 \pm 0.2 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$) and is the only one of these pathways that is thermodynamically viable. The conclusion that reaction 4 proceeds via a HAT mechanism is supported by the KIE of 3.8.

The ascorbate + $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ reaction (eq 1), as noted above, also proceeds by an HAT mechanism. The BDFE for HAsc^- in MeCN has not been reported, but the aqueous BDFE for ascorbate is calculated to be $74 \pm 3 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$ from eq 5, the aqueous thermochemical data,²¹ and the aqueous C_G of $57.5 \pm 2 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$.¹⁶ Our preliminary thermochemical data suggest that the BDFE is lower in MeCN but not lower than the BDFE of TEMPOH. In this light, the $3.5 \times 10^7 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ rate constant for reaction 1 is rapid, suggesting a small intrinsic barrier to HAT. Ascorbate has been shown to be a competent H-atom donor in both water and acetonitrile,²² and Njus et al. showed that *cyt b*₅₆₁ reacts with ascorbate by CPET.⁴ Njus did not suggest a deprotonated histidinate ligand analogous to $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ but such ligands have been implicated in proton-coupled ET reactions of *cyt b*₅₆₁²³ and Rieske proteins,²⁴ and discussed for other heme cofactors.²⁵

In conclusion, the $\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}\text{Im}$ and $\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}\text{ImH}$ complexes that are models for heme cofactors undergo facile reactions in acetonitrile with an ascorbate derivative, hydroquinone and benzoquinone, phenoxyl and nitroxyl radicals, and a hydroxylamine. These reactions are potential models for biological reactions of histidine-ligated hemes with oxyl radicals and with hydroxyl substrates. The TEMPO[•]/TEMPOH and ascorbate reactions proceed by a hydrogen atom transfer (HAT) pathway, a type of concerted proton–electron transfer (CPET). On the basis of these results, HAT reactions should be considered as part of the primary arsenal of reactivity of histidine-ligated heme cofactors.

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Supporting Information Available: Experimental details for synthetic, kinetic, and thermochemical studies. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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